

Théo Mercier

Groundworld

Studio+Compagnie

Théo Mercier

Théo Mercier is a French sculptor and stage director. Born in Paris in 1984, he currently lives and works between Paris and Marseille (France). Claiming formal freedom, Théo Mercier sets out to deconstruct the mechanisms of history, objects and representations, in which he recreates harmonious contradictions. By turns explorer, collector and artist, his work is at the crossroads of anthropology, geopolitics, tourism and landscape. Resident at Villa Medici in 2013 and nominated for the Marcel-Duchamp prize in 2014, Théo Mercier has also won the Silver Lion at the 2019 Venice Biennale for Dance with Steven Michel, as well as the Jury Prize for the French Pavilion at the Prague Quadrennial in 2023 with Céline Peychet. In 2022, he was awarded Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres by the French Ministry of Culture. He has had major solo exhibitions at the Villa Medici (Roma), the Conciergerie de Paris, the Fondation Luma Westbau (Zurich), the Collection Lambert (Avignon), the Museo El Eco (Mexico), the Habana Biennial (Cuba), the Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature (Paris), the [mac] Musée d'art contemporain (Marseille), the Lieu Unique (Nantes) and the Tri Postal (Lille). His work has also been shown in numerous group shows, including at the Centre Pompidou (Paris, Shanghai), the Hamburger Bahnhof (Berlin), the Palacio Bellas Artes (Mexico) and Arts Jameel (Dubai). Shifting from the “white cube” to the “black box”, Mercier is also a stage director. His performances have been shown at Nanterre-Amandiers, the Festival d'Automne, the Ménagerie de verre and the Centre Pompidou (Paris), the Festival d'Avignon, Theater Spektakel (Zurich), Vidy (Lausanne), La Bâtie (Geneva), Usine C (Montreal), The Invisible dog Art Center (New York), the Festival Actoral (Marseille), the Vooroit Art Center (Ghent) or the Short Theater (Rome), among others.

Théo Mercier is represented by galerie mor charpentier (Paris, Bogota), and is Associate Artist at the Théâtre National de Bretagne (Rennes).

Groudworld Studio+Company is the associative structure that produces Mercier's exhibition and live performance projects in France and internationally. Between the practice of the "white cube" and that of the "black box", Groudworld appears as a place of meeting, research and experimentation around what the artist often calls the "gray zone": this in-between space, where artistic forms and networks overflow their original category, and where gazes and habits shift to propose new artistic experiences.

Alongside his working partners Céline Peychet (studio manager) and Alix Sarrade (manager of live performance productions), Mercier develops artistic and strategic thinking around situated modes of production, focusing in particular on locally available materials, networks and know-how. Moving his studio and company according to institutional invitations, most often over long periods of time, he develops a collective working method that lies at the crossroads between field investigation and site-specific creation. His artistic projects usually function as responses to the architectures and contexts in which his work is invited. With his team, he thus attempts to formulate artistic working hypotheses in tune with the economic, ecological and socio-political issues of our time. In short, Groudworld is a production space that is seeking to understand what it is to be an independent, responsible and sustainable artist and producer in the age of globalization.

Selection of artworks

Solo show

Mirror Error

Galerie mor charpentier, Paris, France

2 September – 30 September 2023

For his second solo show at mor charpentier, Théo Mercier questions the role of the archetypal object and the place of the artist halfway between curator, laboratory technician and cybernaut. Through a series of original wall works, deeply informed by artistic references, he challenges traditional representations of portraiture and landscape, and creates complex visual narratives that explore notions of time, identity and adaptation.

Some twenty acid-etched mirrors are displayed on the gallery's two levels, from which emerge photographs of famous antique statues. The chemical treatment of the surface and the arrangement of the composition are such that fragments of the sculptures are superimposed on the viewer's image, blurring the boundaries between past and present, static and dynamic, art and life, and prompting reflection on the fluidity of identity and the continuum of history and information.

Alongside this series of wall works entitled Facetime, the Mirror Error exhibition is completed by three collections of stones and hand-painted poems, arranged on glass and brushed aluminum shelves reminiscent of ultra-contemporary mirror frames and once again evoking this clash of temporalities. In this series entitled Tell me a scorie, stone is the starting point for this project: the sculptor's raw material, it embodies our fantasies of weight and eternity, and also refers to the artist's more intimate collecting practice. Almost every day, whether he's in Paris, Marseille, Los Angeles, Mexico or Tasmania, he devotes a moment to walking and collecting stones - natural or modified by the hand of man. With their multitude of sizes, shapes and colors, they stimulate and accompany his thoughts and visions, and become objects charged with music.

Vue d'exposition
Mirror Error

Galerie mor charpentier, Paris
2023



Vue d'exposition
*Facetime (tête de
philosophe)*

Galerie mor charpentier, Paris
2023



Vue d'exposition
Facetime (Faustine la Jeune)

Galerie mor charpentier, Paris
2023



Vue d'exposition
*Facetime (l'Empereur
Caligula, de face)*

Galerie mor charpentier, Paris
2023



Vue d'exposition
Mirror Error

Galerie mor charpentier, Paris
2023



Vue d'exposition
*Facetime (Vase
d'Hera)*

Galerie mor charpentier, Paris
2023



Vue d'exposition
*Facetime (la larme de
Melpomène tenant
un masque dans sa
main)*

Galerie mor charpentier, Paris
2023



Vue d'exposition
*Facetime (Statue-
Menhir à figure
humaine)*

Galerie mor charpentier, Paris
2023



Vue d'exposition
*Facetime (inconnu
romain)*

Pavillon Français, PQ23
2023



Vue d'exposition
Mirror Error

Galerie mor charpentier, Paris
2023



Vue d'exposition
Mirror Error

Galerie mor charpentier, Paris
2023



Vue d'exposition
Mirror Error

Galerie mor charpentier, Paris
2023



Vue d'exposition
Mirror Error

Galerie mor charpentier, Paris
2023



Vue d'exposition
Tell Me a Scorie
(about landscape)

Galerie mor charpentier, Paris
2023



Vue d'exposition
Tell Me a Scorie
(about what you see)

Galerie mor charpentier, Paris
2023



Vue d'exposition
Tell Me a Scorie
(about what you see)

Galerie mor charpentier, Paris
2023



Vue d'exposition
*Facetime (tête de
femme cycladique)*

Galerie mor charpentier, Paris
2023



Vue d'exposition
*Facetime (Empereur
Caligula, de dos)*

Galerie mor charpentier, Paris
2023



Solo show

Bad Timing

Villa Médicis, Rome, Italie

9 June – 2 October 2023

Sometimes a little accident is just enough. One hesitation too many, one thought that holds us back a little longer than usual. Sometimes, on the contrary, everything flows too smoothly and we slip too easily into where we were supposed to arrive. In both cases, we've missed the moment; arriving too early or too late, we've confused the course of events. Suddenly, then, destiny stumbles: everything happens in a way no one could have imagined. Roles become blurred, and the characters in our lives exchange masks, events pile up one on top of the other. We are lost in time, as if in a foreign city.

Théo Mercier extends this common everyday experience to the whole world. Now it's our planet that seems to have missed the rendezvous with its own history and destiny. The consequences are impressive. Antiquity and the contemporary exchange places, when one tries to take power over the other, to abuse it, to hold it hostage. But a planet where everything keeps missing its time also triggers a kind of cosmic turmoil. While things try to free themselves from the human empire, cars crash to the ground like birds struck by lightning, and stones fall on the city. In this minuet of plagues befalling the Earth, a new ritual of liberation might be hidden. What we are experiencing is not the time of the end: it's also the moment when past and future lose themselves in each other and try to invent a new world.

Emanuele Coccia

Vue d'exposition
Birds Don't Cry

Villa Médicis, Rome, Italie
2023



Vue d'exposition
Birds Don't Cry

Villa Médicis, Rome, Italie
2023



Vue d'exposition
Birds Don't Cry

Villa Médicis, Rome, Italie
2023



Vue d'exposition
Birds Don't Cry

Villa Médicis, Rome, Italie
2023



Vue d'exposition
Birds Don't Cry

Villa Médicis, Rome, Italie
2023



Vue d'exposition
An Endless Summer

Villa Médicis, Rome, Italie
2023



Vue d'exposition
An Endless Summer

Villa Médicis, Rome, Italie
2023



Vue d'exposition
An Endless Summer

Villa Médicis, Rome, Italie
2023



Vue d'exposition
Antique Bounding

Villa Médicis, Rome, Italie
2023



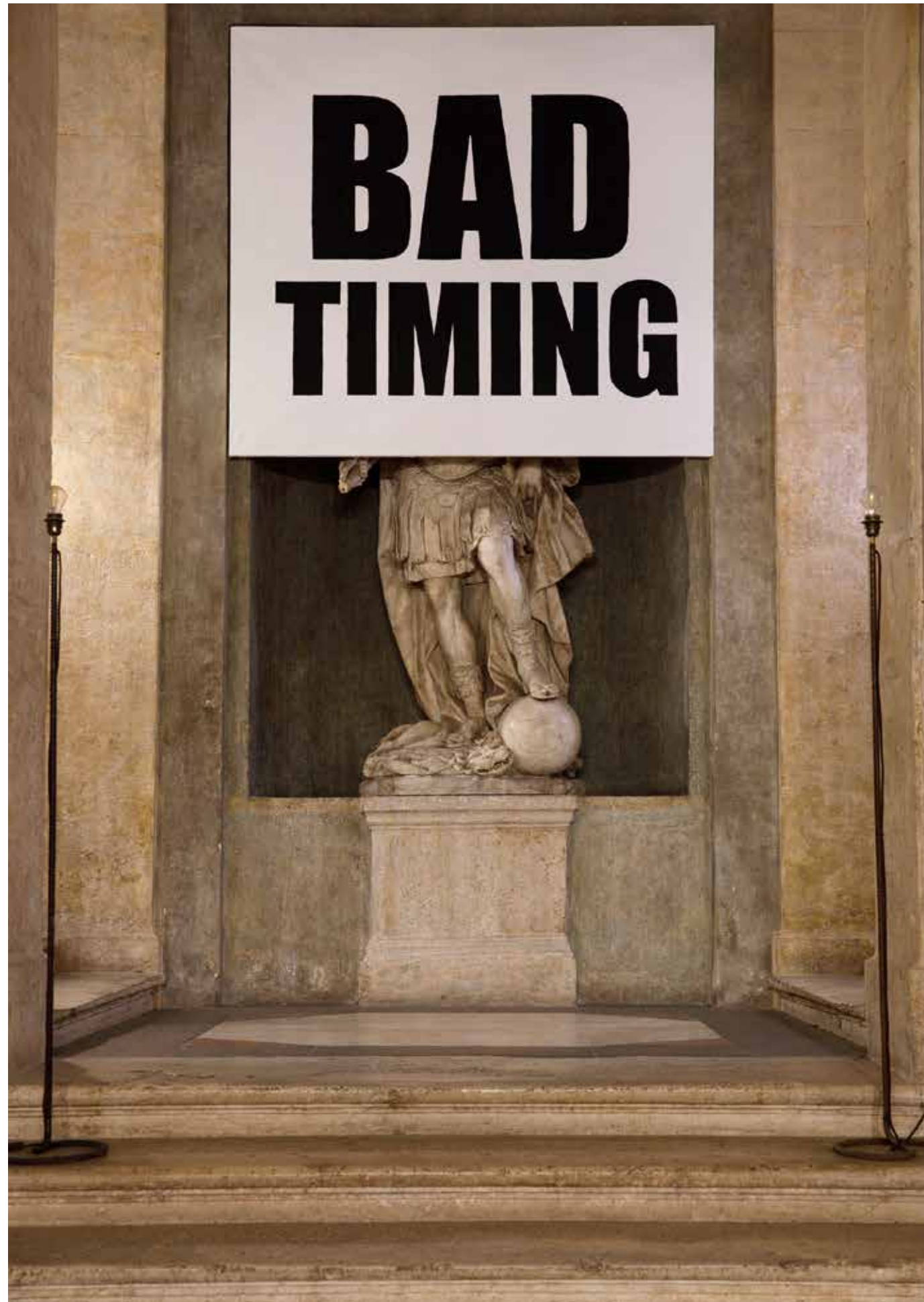
Vue d'exposition
Antique Washing

Villa Médicis, Rome, Italie
2023



Vue d'exposition
Bad Timing

Villa Médicis, Rome, Italie
2023



Vue d'exposition
Only Light Left Over

Villa Médicis, Rome, Italie
2023



Vue d'exposition
Catch of the Night

Villa Médicis, Rome, Italie
2023



Vue d'exposition
Catch of the Night

Villa Médicis, Rome, Italie
2023



Vue d'exposition
Catch of the Night

Villa Médicis, Rome, Italie
2023



Solo show

Gut City Punch

In collaboration Céline Peychet

French Pavillion, Prague Quadriennial 23

8 June – 18 June 2023

Jury Award

Gut City Punch is an installation entirely sculpted in sand, which focuses on massive urbanization and the bowels of our soil. In the interior space of Prague's former slaughterhouses, sixty tons of sand from a few kilometers up the Vltava are transported, compacted and sculpted in the image of the city as a permanent construction site. At the end of the exhibition, the sand is transported back to its place of origin, making the French Pavilion a production model based on the borrowing of materials in a short circuit. In the context of an international fair dedicated to scenography, the project attempts to formulate an aesthetic hypothesis that is both viable and sustainable, in a tension between a maximalist gesture in terms of its visual impact and a minimalist gesture in terms of its ecological impact.

Under a ceiling of LEDs and in the manner of a disaster vivarium, Gut City Punch offers the public the spectacle of a gutted city, displaced within the architecture. In what looks like a landslide sculpted entirely of sand, underground sand pipes emerge from the material, like the post-industrial guts that inhabit the belly of the earth. Suddenly, the audience finds itself beneath the surface of the ground, in touch with the immense entrails that make our daily lives powerful, connected, electrifiable, drinkable and directly evacuable. Through this gesture of inverted architecture, we witness a paradoxical state of matter. The scarcity of sand is measured by the exponential growth of buildings, freeways and artificial beaches built in non-recyclable concrete, which are conquering the space of land, sea and sky. Both complicit in and abolitionist of the system, Gut City Punch is interested in the phenomenon of destruction in order to rebuild it, and in the phenomenon of construction in order to deconstruct it. For the installation could be as much the mirage of a model that has become sick and obsolete, as it is the eulogy of debris with which to recompose potentially more radical forms of life, city, economy and ecology, right down to our ways of constructing theaters, stages, scenographies, performances and narratives...

Vue d'exposition
Gut City Punch

Pavillon Français, PQ23
2023



Vue d'exposition
Gut City Punch

Pavillon Français, PQ23
2023



Vue d'exposition
Gut City Punch

Pavillon Français, PQ23
2023



Vue d'exposition
Gut City Punch

Pavillon Français, PQ23
2023



Trilogy of performative show

Outremonde

Chapter I

5 July – 26 September 2023

Collection Lambert en Avignon, France

In collaboration with Festival d'Avignon

Chapter II, Dream Hunters

10 June – 4 September 2022

Fondation Luma Westbau, Zurich, Switzerland

In collaboration with Zurich Theater Spektakel

Chapter III, The Sleeping Chapter

14 October 2022 – 8 January 2023

Conciergerie de Paris, France

In collaboration with Festival d'Automne à Paris

Outremonde is a series of living exhibitions initiated by Théo Mercier in 2021. Like a gray zone where the white cube of the museum and the black box of the theater meet, this series of exhibition-performances brings together for the first time the artist's two practices as sculptor and stage director. The first project, presented in 2021 at the Collection Lambert in Avignon in collaboration with the Festival d'Avignon, served as a pilot for a three-part series that continued the following year at Luma Westbau Zurich (2022), then at the Conciergerie in Paris (2022).

Using locally sourced and borrowed sand, Outremonde is a metaphysical tale of childhood, metamorphosis and the powers of imagination. In this landscape sculpted entirely from sand, we encounter watchful dogs, the foot of a colossus, a Gothic ruin in the process of dissolving, a devastated forest... The artist stages the museum's architecture as if it were an inner landscape, a vessel beneath the surface of the world, a survivalist bunker in an uncertain future, or a laboratory for the recollection of memory whose heart beats to the rhythm of a matrix hermetically sealed from reality.

Gliding from deserted landscape to living landscape, a series of psychedelic-tale performances explores the mystery of exhibitions. Guided by an omniscient child, the public will embark on a sleep tour punctuated by somnambulistic encounters, in the manner of a three-dimensional tarot reading.

Vue d'exposition
Outremonde I

Collection Lambert, Avignon
2021



Vue d'exposition
Outremonde I

Collection Lambert, Avignon
2021



Vue d'exposition
Outremonde I

Collection Lambert, Avignon
2021



Vue d'exposition
Outremonde I

Collection Lambert, Avignon
2021



Vue d'exposition
Outremonde I

Collection Lambert, Avignon
2021



Vue d'exposition
Outremonde I

Collection Lambert, Avignon
2021



Vue d'exposition
Outremonde I

Collection Lambert, Avignon
2021



Vue d'exposition
Outremonde I

Collection Lambert, Avignon
2021



Vue d'exposition
Outremonde I

Collection Lambert, Avignon
2021



Vue d'exposition
Outremonde II

Luma Westbau, Zurich
2022



Vue d'exposition
Outremonde II

Luma Westbau, Zurich
2022



Vue d'exposition
Outremonde II

Luma Westbau, Zurich
2022



Vue d'exposition
Outremonde II

Luma Westbau, Zurich
2022



Vue d'exposition
Outremonde II

Luma Westbau, Zurich
2022



Vue d'exposition
Outremonde II

Luma Westbau, Zurich
2022



Vue d'exposition
Outremonde II

Luma Westbau, Zurich
2022



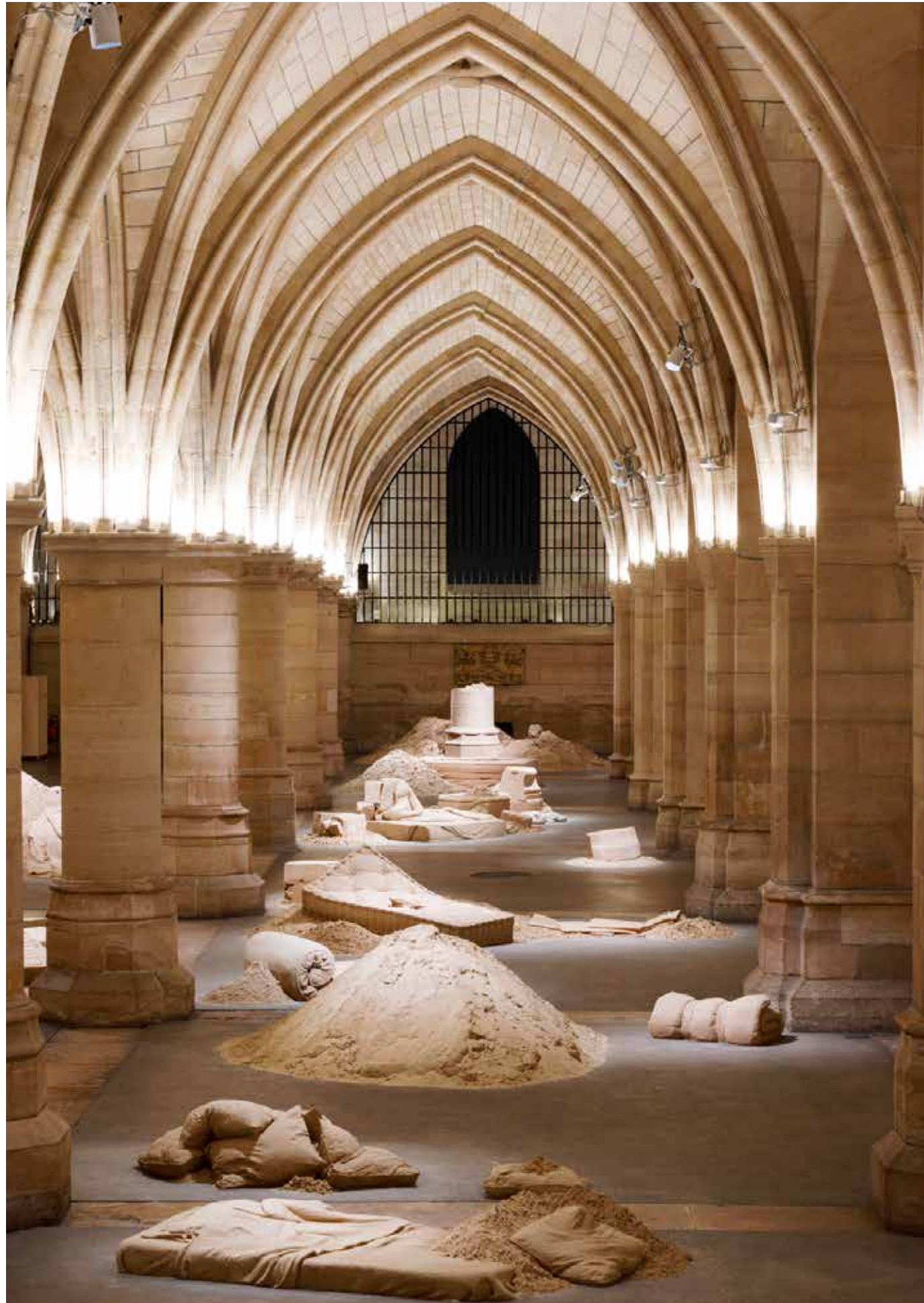
Vue d'exposition
Outremonde II

Luma Westbau, Zurich
2022



Vue d'exposition
Outremonde III

Conciergerie de Paris, France
2022



Vue d'exposition
Outremonde III

Conciergerie de Paris, France
2022



Vue d'exposition
Outremonde III

Conciergerie de Paris, France
2022



Vue d'exposition
Outremonde III

Conciergerie de Paris, France
2022



Vue d'exposition
Outremonde III

Conciergerie de Paris, France
2022



Vue d'exposition
Outremonde III

Conciergerie de Paris, France
2022



Vue d'exposition
Outremonde III

Conciergerie de Paris, France
2022



Vue d'exposition
Outremonde III

Conciergerie de Paris, France
2022



Vue d'exposition
Outremonde III

Conciergerie de Paris, France
2022



Solo show

Nécrocéan

Le Portique – Centre d'art Contemporain, Le Havre, France

25 June – 26 September 2021

Resulting from several years of collaboration with artisans from the Guerrero, southern Mexico, “Nécrocéan” have been specially designed for the exhibition in Le Havre. Rescued from the garbage cans and scrap heaps of Mexico City, tires, chairs and plastic bottles are meticulously reproduced using the pre-Hispanic technique of sculpting semi-precious stones, such as white onyx, which dominates this new production with its ghostly yet smooth appearance. With the portmanteau word “Necrocean”, the artist tells the story conveyed by these objects, the traditions and cultural traces of which they are the heirs, but also the path taken by the works transported, from Veracruz to the port of Le Havre. The exhibition evokes the world of the sea as an invitation to travel, but also and above all as a space for the transfer and circulation of materials, goods, objects, values and waste – the continent we sometimes call the plastic continent. The exhibition recounts and explores the complex issue of globalization and the sea as a place of transfer, a place where everything is permitted and everything is controlled at the same time.

Vue d'exposition
Nécrocéan

Le Portique, Le Havre
2021



Vue d'exposition
Nécrocéan

Le Portique, Le Havre
2021



Vue d'exposition
Nécrocéan

Le Portique, Le Havre
2021



Vue d'exposition
Nécrocéan

Le Portique, Le Havre
2021



Vue d'exposition
Antique Bounding

Villa Médicis, Rome, Italie
2023



Vue d'exposition
Nécrocéan

Le Portique, Le Havre
2021



Vue d'exposition
Nécrocéan

Le Portique, Le Havre
2021



Vue d'exposition
Nécrocéan

Le Portique, Le Havre
2021



Vue d'exposition
Nécrocéan

Le Portique, Le Havre
2021



Vue d'exposition
Nécrocéan

Le Portique, Le Havre
2021



Vue d'exposition
Nécrocéan

Le Portique, Le Havre
2021



Installation

Relation Predation

EX-AFRICA, curator : Philippe Dagen

Musée du Quai Branly, Paris, France

2020

Since 2015, Théo Mercier has been interested in a typology of objects that exist on the bangs of the ethnographic art museum, but which emerge from a joint history of artistic, political and colonial relations between Europe and Africa: the market for «cheap» African masks destined to decorate European interiors. In the jargon of museum curators and art collectors, these masks that «didn't dance» are often referred to as «bits of wood». For if Europeans are most often looking for «authenticity», some African sculptors and antique dealers will speak rather of the mask's «veracity». Although these masks are «fakes», they are probably also «real» fakes.

For Théo Mercier, the import/export of these African «contemporary antiques» tells a complex story of expropriation, appropriation and fantasies of African art in Europe. The Relation predation series combines a collection of «false» masks (Eket, Fang, Ibibio, Igbo, Kwele, Lega or Pende) intertwined and connected by means of heated PVC tubes bent between their various orifices, in the manner of a parasitic network. This artist's gesture is reminiscent of the undulation of the pest, the worm that feeds on, infects and decomposes the wood of masks, against which the field of preventive conservation has developed the technique of treatment by anoxia, which consists of asphyxiating an object to make it museumable. Literally «entubés», these masks gratingly express the complexity of the relationships of engulfment, assimilation, predation and projection in which they are «caught», and «despised». This mesh attempts to account for the different levels of appropriation of these masks, and gives shape to a deceptive cartography of commercial and ideological flows. What the artist otherwise calls a «conceptual and cultural food chain» of African art.



Vue studio
Relation Predation

2020



Vue studio
Relation Predation

2020







Vue studio
Relation Predation

2020



Vue studio
Relation Predation

2020



Exposition personnelle

Ballad of Disaster

Proyectos Monclova, Mexico DF, Mexico

18 March – 17 April 2021

The works in *Ballad of Disaster* highlight the micropolitics of microhistory. Behind each object lie stories of power, distribution, extraction, manufacture, who buys it, who moves it and why. Each object branches out from what is told; it is a fabrication of history.

«I walk through a market like I walk through a botanical garden,» Mercier explains. As a flâneur, a hijacker of objects, the artist turns the exhibition into a petrified park, a souvenir store of a culture of domestic drama, where the museum replicas of a civilization in decline can be found. Like goods for sale in a marketplace, the manner and placement of the pieces make all the difference to how we read them and move among them: the artist's juxtapositions create other possible readings and meanings.

With his sculptures, and by conceiving the exhibition itself as a work of art, Mercier creates different relational situations, more akin to the theatrical work of staging than to sculpture as such. The work of art is the social mobility of these objects, which move up and down in time: from the market square at the foot of a temple 700 years ago to an open-air market stall in our neoliberal world; a spray bottle that goes from 10 pesos to 15 million euros in the course of its own aspirational journey.

Vue d'exposition
Ballad of Disaster

Proyectos Monclova, Mexico
DF, Mexique
2021



Vue d'exposition
Ballad of Disaster

Proyectos Monclova, Mexico
DF, Mexique
2021



Vue d'exposition
Ballad of Disaster

Proyectos Monclova, Mexico
DF, Mexique
2021



Vue d'exposition
Ballad of Disaster

Proyectos Monclova, Mexico
DF, Mexique
2021



Vue d'exposition
Ballad of Disaster

Proyectos Monclova, Mexico
DF, Mexique
2021



Vue d'exposition
Ballad of Disaster

Proyectos Monclova, Mexico
DF, Mexique
2021



Vue d'exposition
Ballad of Disaster

Proyectos Monclova, Mexico
DF, Mexique
2021



Vue d'exposition
Ballad of Disaster

Proyectos Monclova, Mexico
DF, Mexique
2021



Vue d'exposition
Ballad of Disaster

Proyectos Monclova, Mexico
DF, Mexique
2021



Vue d'exposition
Ballad of Disaster

Proyectos Monclova, Mexico
DF, Mexique
2021



Vue d'exposition
Ballad of Disaster

Proyectos Monclova, Mexico
DF, Mexique
2021



Vue d'exposition
Ballad of Disaster

Proyectos Monclova, Mexico
DF, Mexique
2021



Vue d'exposition
Ballad of Disaster

Proyectos Monclova, Mexico
DF, Mexique
2021



Installation

La Cinquième Saison

Cabinets de curiosités (cur.: Laurent Lebon)

Fonds Hélène et Edouard Leclerc, Landerneau, France

22 June – 3 November 2019

Designed for the «Cabinets de curiosités» exhibition, La cinquième saison [The Fifth Season] takes up the form of the diorama in a screen-plasma version that strangely reminds us that museums and advertising share quite similar techniques for staging reality. With this installation, Théo Mercier opens a meteorological window onto an anticipatory landscape deserted by humans and littered with their future archaeological remains. Fascinated by the moment when objects tip over into oblivion or history, into the dustbin or the museum, the artist stages two deceptive series of works in what almost resembles the degree zero of the plastic continent. The first, «Pre-hispanic wastes», created in collaboration with artisans from the Guerrero region of Mexico, is a series of replicas of everyday waste in semi-precious stones. Delicately illuminated by a luminous scenario, these tires, cans, bottles and other remnants of hyperconsumerism are transfigured by stone, alongside a second series of faux agate slices and enlarged flints, «Whispering stones». Through an inversion of value and scale, Theo Mercier blurs the boundaries of a particularly ambiguous geological collection, in which the products of «nature» and «culture» achieve the same eternity, and fatally question the fate of human exceptionalism in the face of the world.

Vue d'exposition
La Cinquième Saison

Fonds Hélène et Edouard
Leclerc, Landerneau, France
2019



Vue d'exposition
La Cinquième Saison

Fonds Hélène et Edouard
Leclerc, Landerneau, France
2019



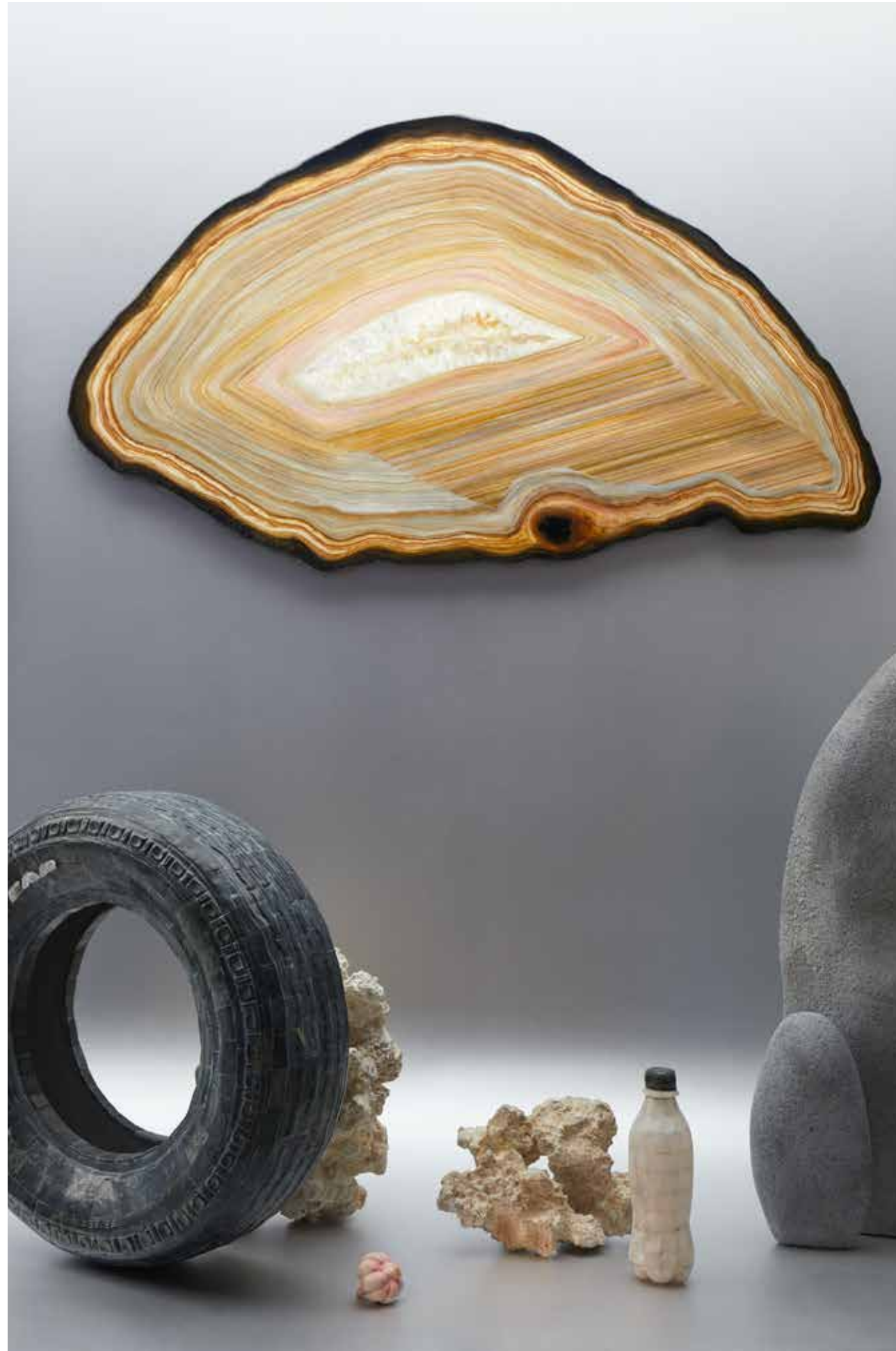
Vue d'exposition
La Cinquième Saison

Fonds Hélène et Edouard
Leclerc, Landerneau, France
2019



Vue d'exposition
La Cinquième Saison

Fonds Hélène et Edouard
Leclerc, Landerneau, France
2019



Vue studio
Whispering stone

2020



Vue studio
Whispering stone

2020



Vue studio
Whispering stone

2020



Vue studio
Whispering stone

2020



Vue studio
Whispering stone

2020



Vue studio
Whispering stone

2020



Exposition collective

Relation Predation

EX-AFRICA, commissaire : Philippe Dagen

Musée du Quai Branly, Paris, France

2020

Depuis 2015, Théo Mercier s'intéresse à une typologie d'objets qui existent en marge du musée d'art ethnographique mais qui émergent d'une histoire conjointe des relations artistiques, politiques et coloniales entre l'Europe et l'Afrique : le marché des masques africains « bon marché » destinés à la décoration des intérieurs européens. Dans le jargon des conservateurs de musée ou des collectionneurs d'art, ces masques qui « n'ont pas dansé » sont souvent appelés « bouts de bois ». Car si les européens sont le plus souvent à la recherche d'« authenticité », certains des sculpteurs et antiquaires africains parleront plutôt de « véracité » du masque. Bien qu'étant de vrais « faux », ces masques sont probablement aussi des faux « vrais ».

L'import/export de ces « antiquités contemporaines » africaines racontent pour Théo Mercier une histoire complexe d'expropriation, d'appropriation et de fantasmes de l'art africain en Europe. La série Relation predation combine une collection de « faux » masques (Eket, Fang, Ibibio, Igbo, Kwele, Lega ou Pende) entremêlés et connectés au moyen de tubes de PVC chauffés et cintrés entre leurs différents orifices, à la manière d'un réseau parasitaire. Ce geste d'artiste n'est d'ailleurs pas sans rappeler l'ondulation du nuisible, du ver qui se nourrit, infecte et décompose le bois des masques, face auquel le champ de la conservation préventive a développé la technique de traitement par anoxie, qui consiste à asphyxier un objet pour le rendre muséable. Littéralement « entubés », ces masques expriment avec grincement la complexité des rapports d'engloutissement, d'assimilation, de prédation et de projection dans lesquels ils sont « pris », et « mépris ». Ce maillage tente de rendre compte des différents niveaux d'appropriation de ces masques, et donne forme à une cartographie trompeuse des flux marchands et idéologiques. Ce que l'artiste appelle autrement une « chaîne alimentaire conceptuelle et culturelle » de l'art africain.



Vue studio
Relation Predation

2020



Vue studio
Relation Predation

2020







Vue studio
Relation Predation

2020



Vue studio
Relation Predation

2020



Solo show

Every Stone Should Cry

Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature, Paris, France

23 April – 30 June 2019

We may no longer live with nature, but we cherish the idea we have of it, an infinitely replicable concept that lends itself to every fantasy and market. For his second solo show at the Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature, Théo Mercier deploys a two-stage narrative around the object. While the museum's permanent collections replay the ambiguous notion of curiosities in a theatrical display, the dramaturgy of the temporary room plunges visitors into a space with biotechnological charm, somewhere between playground, pet shop and behavioral psychology study, to reveal the artificiality of our relationship with nature. From feelings of solitude to ecological peril, Théo Mercier examines the complex degradation of our relationship with Nature, staging a succession of anticipatory rooms that unfold like an artificial garden, in which visitors are potentially the first witnesses of an imminent post-natural catastrophe.

Vue d'exposition
Ballad of Disaster

Proyectos Monclova, Mexico
DF, Mexique
2021



Vue d'exposition
*Every Stone Should
Cry*

Musée de la Chasse et de la
Nature, Paris, France
2019



Vue d'exposition
*Every Stone Should
Cry*

Musée de la Chasse et de la
Nature, Paris, France
2019



Vue d'exposition
*Every Stone Should
Cry*

Musée de la Chasse et de la
Nature, Paris, France
2019



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*Every Stone Should
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Musée de la Chasse et de la
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Nature, Paris, France
2019



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*Every Stone Should
Cry*

Musée de la Chasse et de la
Nature, Paris, France
2019



Vue d'exposition
Every Stone Should Cry

Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature, Paris, France
2019



Vue d'exposition
*Every Stone Should
Cry*

Musée de la Chasse et de la
Nature, Paris, France
2019



Vue d'exposition
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Nature, Paris, France
2019



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Musée de la Chasse et de la
Nature, Paris, France
2019



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Musée de la Chasse et de la
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*Every Stone Should
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Nature, Paris, France
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Musée de la Chasse et de la
Nature, Paris, France
2019



Vue d'exposition
*Every Stone Should
Cry*

Musée de la Chasse et de la
Nature, Paris, France
2019



Vue d'exposition
*Every Stone Should
Cry*

Musée de la Chasse et de la
Nature, Paris, France
2019



Solo show

Ne me quitte pas

Museo de Artes Decorativas, La Havane Cuba — Biennale de la Havane
12 April – 12 May 2019

Invited to occupy the entire Museo de Artes Decorativas as part of Havana Biennial XIII, Théo Mercier's exhibition «Ne me quitte pas» is like a scenario in which the museum becomes the scene of a restorative archaeology. In this former colonial residence, which became a national museum after Countess Maria Luisa Gomez Mena fled during the Cuban revolution in 1959, the artist has chosen to contaminate the museum's collection, which is largely made up of perfectly preserved, anachronistically styled French objets d'art from the 18th to the 19th century, by reintroducing Cuban forms and know-how that he has discovered during his residencies in Havana. In a gesture he describes as «inverted exoticism», he creates a machine for dismantling time, space and good taste, in which Cubanity reinvests the identity and history of this symbolic building. Like a curator, he paints a portrait of everyday life in Cuba through the handicrafts he has produced in collaboration with various Cuban artists and craftsmen he has met on his travels. Whereas the Cuban countess dreamed of France, the French artist dreams of Cuba in reverse, staging an inverted exoticism that questions the artificiality of our representations and the notion of fair trade.

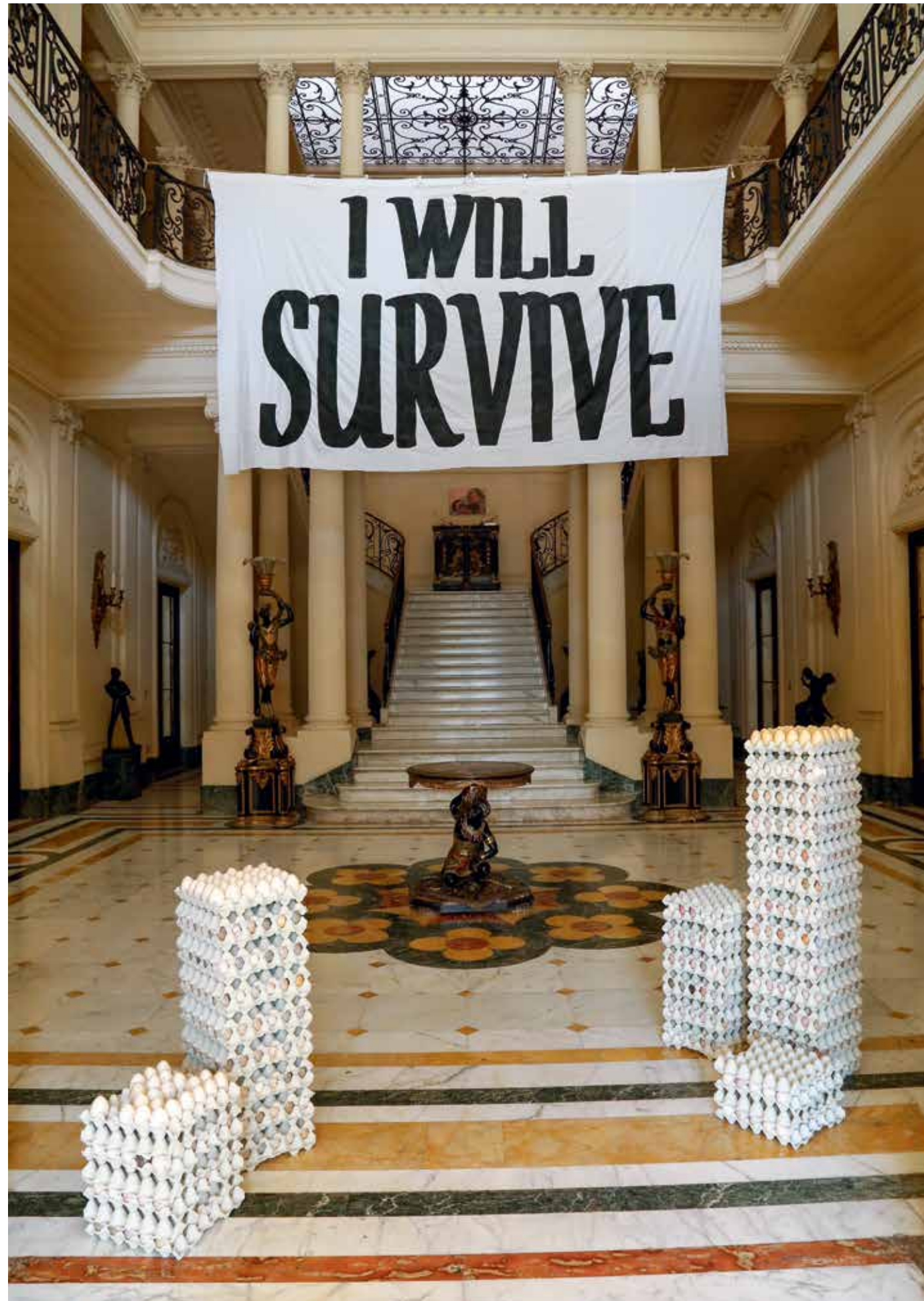
Vue d'exposition
Ne me quitte pas

Museo de Artes Decorativas, La
Havane, Cuba
2019



Vue d'exposition
Ne me quitte pas

Museo de Artes Decorativas, La
Havane, Cuba
2019



Vue d'exposition
Ne me quitte pas

Museo de Artes Decorativas, La
Havane, Cuba
2019



Vue d'exposition
Ne me quitte pas

Museo de Artes Decorativas, La
Havane, Cuba
2019



Vue d'exposition
Ne me quitte pas

Museo de Artes Decorativas, La
Havane, Cuba
2019



Vue d'exposition
Ne me quitte pas

Museo de Artes Decorativas, La
Havane, Cuba
2019



Vue d'exposition
Ne me quitte pas

Museo de Artes Decorativas, La
Havane, Cuba
2019



Vue d'exposition
Ne me quitte pas

Museo de Artes Decorativas, La
Havane, Cuba
2019



Solo show

Legado fantasma

Galeria Marso, Mexico DF, Mexique

10 November 2017 – 13 January 2018

With Legado Fantasma, Théo Mercier reflects on heritage, cultural obsolescence and the ghostly object. He begins by destroying the walls and ceilings of the Mexican gallery, whose debris lies on the floor like the remains of a past tragedy. Echoing the successive earthquakes in Mexico City, he created a series of totemic sculptures of fragile equilibrium, piling up stones, ceramics, eggs and the debris of local figurative sculptures. In an in-situ logic, his «ventanas» (windows) series deconstructs the iconography of masterpieces of ancient Western and pre-Hispanic art to give life to collages of floating images, hybrid orphans from artistic genealogies both confused and playful.

Vue d'exposition
Legado fantasma

Galeria Marso, Mexico DF,
Mexique
2017



Vue d'exposition
Legado fantasma

Galeria Marso, Mexico DF,
Mexique
2017



Vue d'exposition
Legado fantasma

Galeria Marso, Mexico DF,
Mexique
2017



Vue d'exposition
Legado fantasma

Galeria Marso, Mexico DF,
Mexique
2017



Vue d'exposition
Legado fantasma

Galeria Marso, Mexico DF,
Mexique
2017



Vue d'exposition
Legado fantasma

Galeria Marso, Mexico DF,
Mexique
2017



Vue d'exposition
Legado fantasma

Galeria Marso, Mexico DF,
Mexique
2017



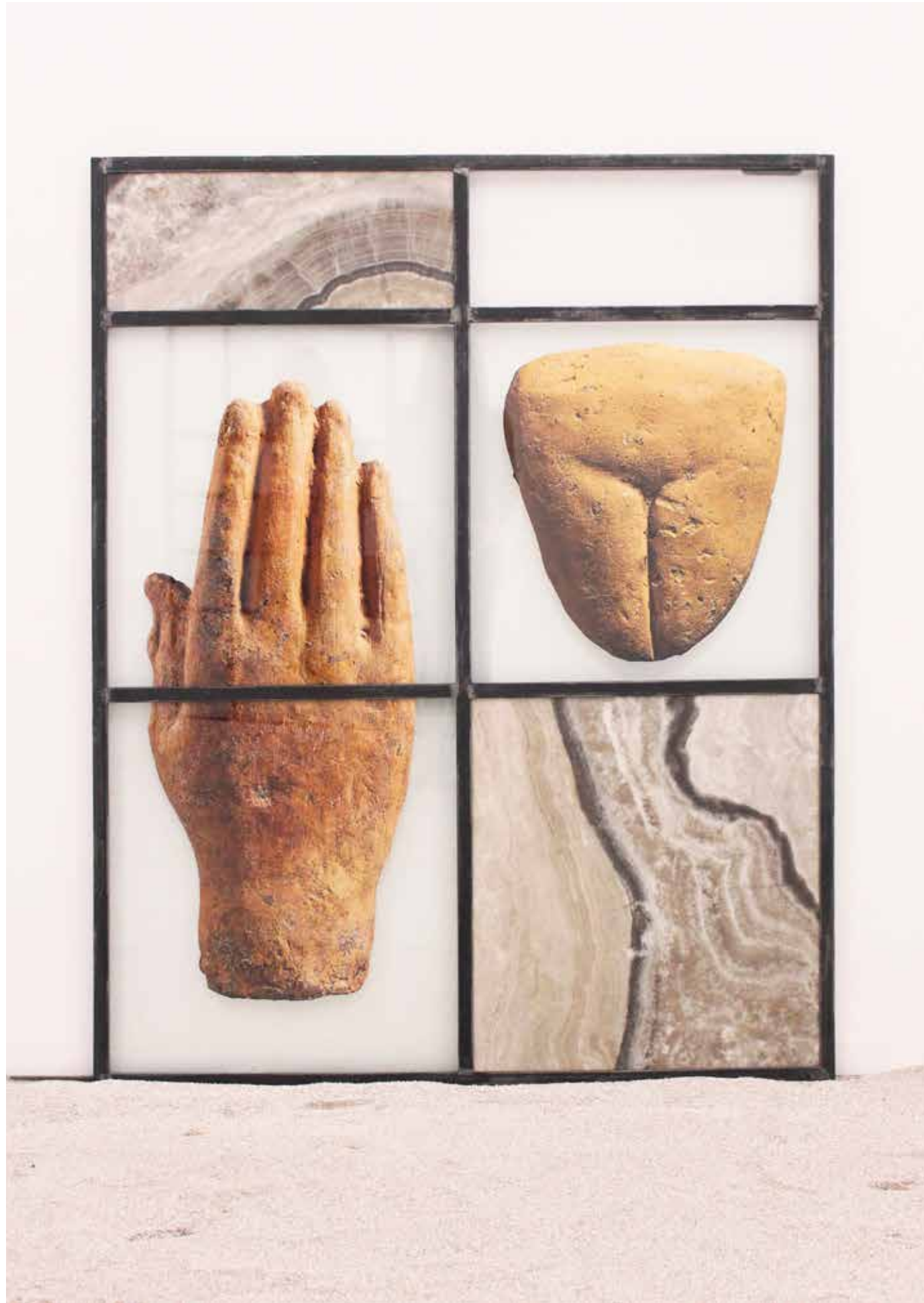
Vue d'exposition
Legado fantasma

Galeria Marso, Mexico DF,
Mexique
2017



Vue d'exposition
Legado fantasma

Galeria Marso, Mexico DF,
Mexique
2017



Vue d'exposition
Legado fantasma

Galeria Marso, Mexico DF,
Mexique
2017



Vue d'exposition
Legado fantasma

Galeria Marso, Mexico DF,
Mexique
2017



Vue d'exposition
Legado fantasma

Galeria Marso, Mexico DF,
Mexique
2017



Vue d'exposition
Legado fantasma

Galeria Marso, Mexico DF,
Mexique
2017



Solo show

Théâtre sans acteurs [Actorless Theater]

CDN Nanterre-Amandiers

January 2017

In 2017, at the invitation of Nanterre-Amandiers, Théo Mercier opened the doors of a hybrid space between installation and studio. Unveiling the sources of his piece *La Fille du collectionneur* (The Collector's Daughter), which was being created a few months before the premiere, he stages his own work and deploys his increasingly cross-disciplinary practice. As if time had suddenly stood still, giving way to a moment that could be likened to a crime scene, Théo Mercier proposes a game of displacement from the exhibition space to the theater stage. He reveals a series of works as clues and pieces of evidence, creating suspense and tension, reinforced by the strangeness of the lighting and sound ambience.

Vue d'exposition
Théâtre sans acteur

CDN Nanterre-Amandiers
2017



Vue d'exposition
Théâtre sans acteur

CDN Nanterre-Amandiers
2017



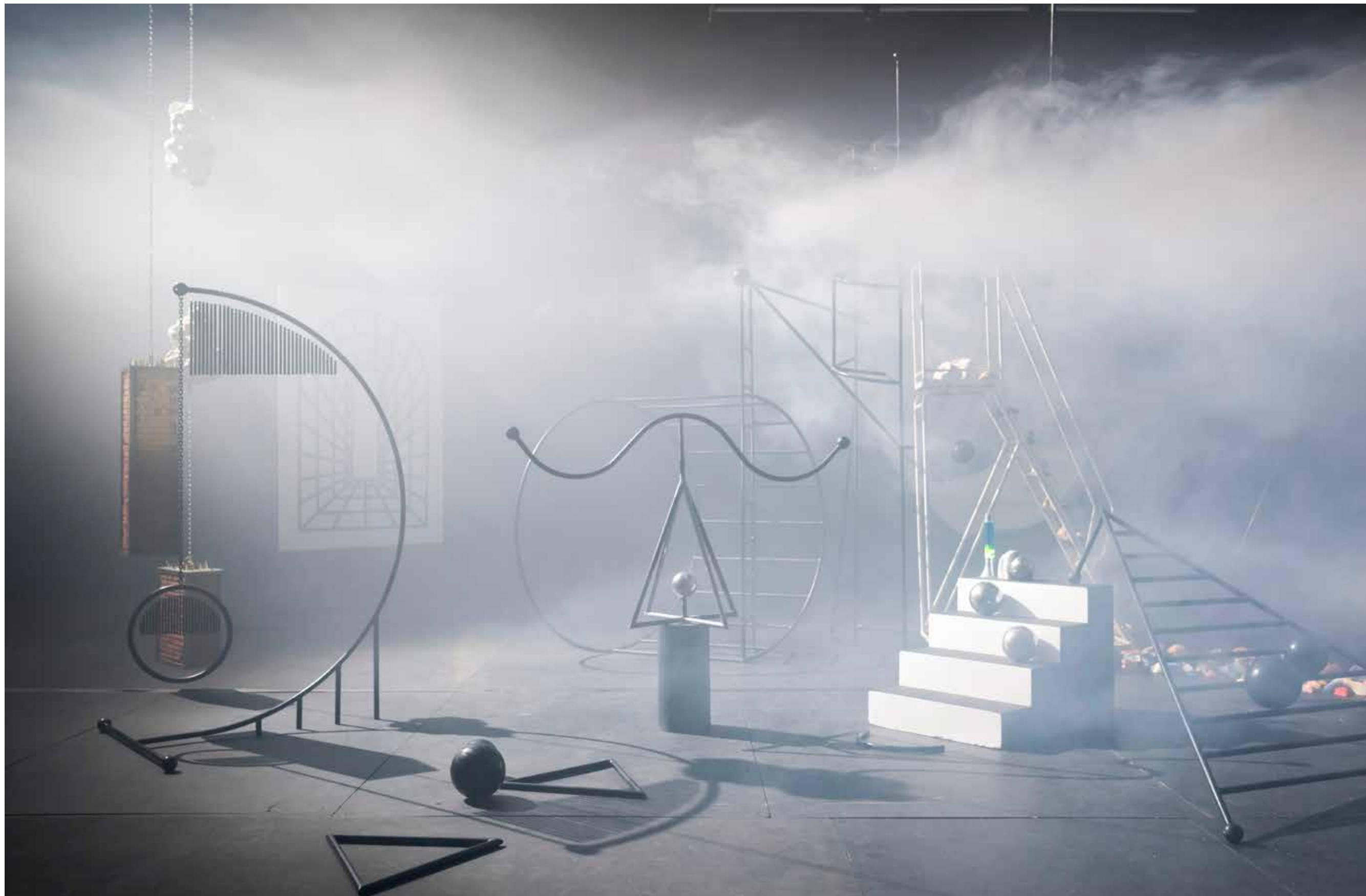
Vue d'exposition
Théâtre sans acteur

CDN Nanterre-Amandiers
2017



Vue d'exposition
Théâtre sans acteur

CDN Nanterre-Amandiers
2017



Solo show

Panorama Zéro

Galerie bugada et cargnel, Paris, France

24 February 2017 – 22 April 2017

For Panorama zéro, Théo Mercier presents an ensemble of sculptures and photographs, through which he questions the making of History, both in its construction and deconstruction. Laying flat the traces of the past and present, he questions the phenomena of ruin and obsolescence. In a landscape of sculptures and assemblages of unstable equilibrium made up of heterogeneous objects, ancient or contemporary, originals or reproductions, he creates an environment in which objects become the harbingers of a disaster to come. Without lapsing into a form of romanticism that he rejects, he operates a form of reverse archaeology that tends to sublimate the processes of destruction.

Vue d'exposition
Panorama zéro

Bugada & Cargnel, Paris
2017



Vue d'exposition
Panorama zéro

Bugada & Cargnel, Paris
2017



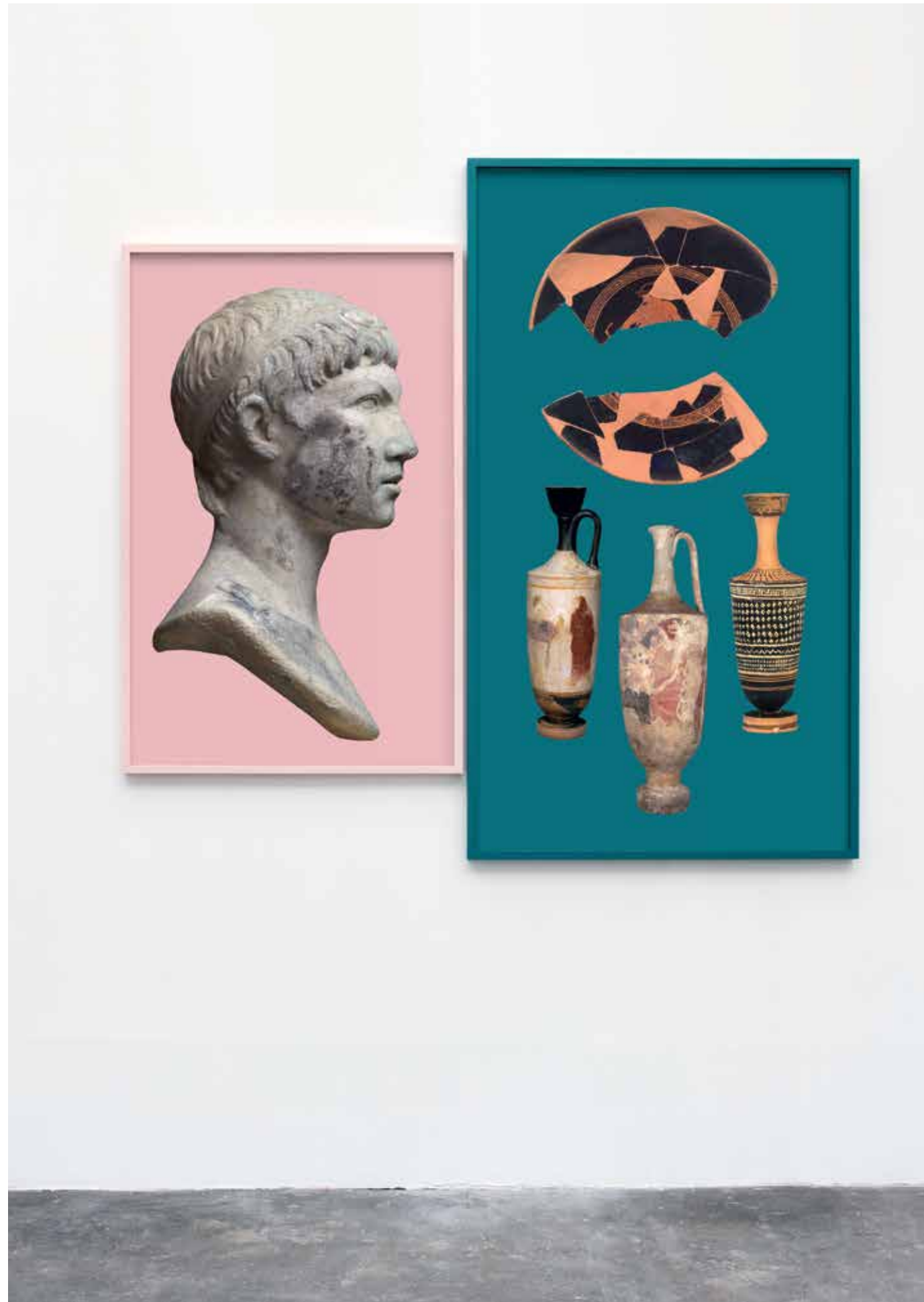
Vue d'exposition
Panorama zéro

Bugada & Cargnel, Paris
2017



Vue d'exposition
Panorama zéro

Bugada & Cargnel, Paris
2017



Vue d'exposition
Panorama zéro

Bugada & Cargnel, Paris
2017



Vue d'exposition
Panorama zéro

Bugada & Cargnel, Paris
2017



Vue d'exposition
Panorama zéro

Bugada & Cargnel, Paris
2017



Solo show

The Thrill is Gone

[Mac] musée d'art contemporain de Marseille, France

September 2016 – January 2017

With *The Thrill is gone*, Théo Mercier brings a critical and disenchanted viewpoint to bear on History, as the narrative principle of a series of perilous sculptures at the crossroads of identity and political claims. What if, in the near future, the African continent were to claim a pioneering place in the history of modern art, conceived long before Derain, Picasso or Braque drew inspiration from it? If art history is the victorious fiction that shapes collective memory, aren't museums the terrain of this ideological battle? Staging a museum in a «state of war», the artist reveals the fictional character of the institution, its ability to program the curatorial process, and its capacity to create a new kind of art.

Vue d'exposition
The Thrill is Gone

[Mac] musée d'art
contemporain de Marseille
2016



Vue d'exposition
The Thrill is Gone

[Mac] musée d'art
contemporain de Marseille
2016



Vue d'exposition
The Thrill is Gone

[Mac] musée d'art
contemporain de Marseille
2016



Vue d'exposition
The Thrill is Gone

[Mac] musée d'art
contemporain de Marseille
2016



Vue d'exposition
The Thrill is Gone

[Mac] musée d'art
contemporain de Marseille
2016



Vue d'exposition
The Thrill is Gone

[Mac] musée d'art
contemporain de Marseille
2016



Vue d'exposition
The Thrill is Gone

[Mac] musée d'art
contemporain de Marseille
2016



Vue d'exposition
The Thrill is Gone

[Mac] musée d'art
contemporain de Marseille
2016



Vue d'exposition
The Thrill is Gone

[Mac] musée d'art
contemporain de Marseille
2016



Vue d'exposition
The Thrill is Gone

[Mac] musée d'art
contemporain de Marseille
2016



Vue d'exposition
The Thrill is Gone

[Mac] musée d'art
contemporain de Marseille
2016



Vue d'exposition
The Thrill is Gone

[Mac] musée d'art
contemporain de Marseille
2016



Vue d'exposition
The Thrill is Gone

[Mac] musée d'art
contemporain de Marseille
2016



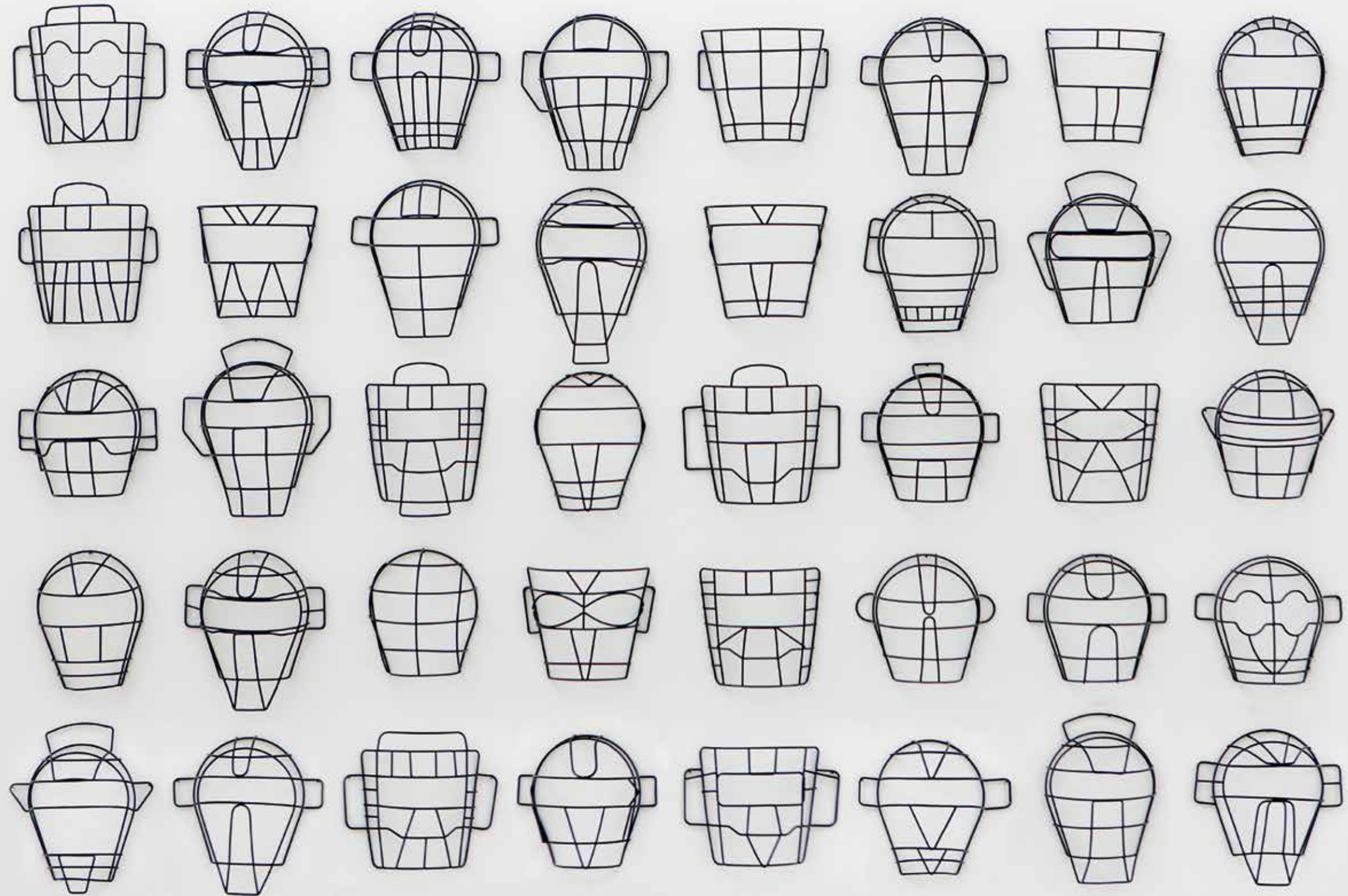
Vue d'exposition
The Thrill is Gone

[Mac] musée d'art
contemporain de Marseille
2016



Vue d'exposition
The Thrill is Gone

[Mac] musée d'art
contemporain de Marseille
2016



Solo show

Nowhere Bodies

The Cabin, Los Angeles – Casa Maauad, Mexico DF, Mexico

2015

Nowhere bodies is a series of totemic sculptures created by Théo Mercier on his arrival in Mexico. Incorporating both spiritual and secular objects found in Mexico City, these sculptures are the fruit of a vision and inspiration stimulated by the discovery of a new culture. Sourced from the ruins of a collapsed colonial house in Mexico City, the timber on which this series of idols is based was carved on a wheel - a process reminiscent of traditional ceramics. In a vertical assemblage, these naively cheerful-looking multicultural idols display a combination of rotation, collapse and reconstruction. A composite vision that refers to the transformation processes carried out by cultural enterprises.

Vue d'exposition
Nowhere Bodies

Casa Maauad, Mexico DF
2015



Vue d'exposition
Nowhere Bodies

Casa Maauad, Mexico DF
2015



Vue d'exposition
Nowhere Bodies

Casa Maauad, Mexico DF
2015



Vue d'exposition
Nowhere Bodies

Vue studio, Mexico DF
2015



Vue d'exposition
Nowhere Bodies

Vue studio, Mexico DF
2015



Vue d'exposition
Nowhere Bodies

Vue studio, Mexico DF
2015



Vue d'exposition
Nowhere Bodies

Vue studio, Mexico DF
2015



Vue d'exposition
Nowhere Bodies

Vue studio, Mexico DF
2015



Vue d'exposition
Nowhere Bodies

Vue studio, Mexico DF
2015



Vue d'exposition
Nowhere Bodies

Vue studio, Mexico DF
2015



Vue d'exposition
Nowhere Bodies

The Cabin, Los Angeles
2015



Installation

Idols of village global

2015

Idols of village global is a series of sculptures created between Paris and Mexico City in 2015. Théo Mercier brings to life a tribe of non-standard sculptures, escaping the dominant binary reading system. Somewhere between animal and human, masculine and feminine, primordial and futuristic, blessed and damned, the members of this marginal family with its totemic allure are singularly renegotiated in a turmoil of gender and identity. Behind the religious authority of these pseudo-idols, a grimace, a wink simultaneously suggest the presence of an underlying voodoo power. By seizing on tribal aesthetics, Théo Mercier straightforwardly reveals the humor and dark beauty that fuel discourse on individual and collective identity.

Vue d'exposition
*Idoles du village
global*

Vue studio
2015



Vue d'exposition
*Idoles du village
global*

Vue studio
2015



Vue d'exposition
*Idoles du village
global*

Vue studio
2015



Vue d'exposition
*Idoles du village
global*

Vue studio
2015



Vue d'exposition
*Idoles du village
global*

Vue studio
2015



Vue d'exposition
*Idoles du village
global*

Vue studio
2015



Vue d'exposition
*Idoles du village
global*

Vue studio
2015



Vue d'exposition
*Idoles du village
global*

Vue studio
2015



Vue d'exposition
*Idoles du village
global*

Vue studio
2015



Vue d'exposition
*Idoles du village
global*

Vue studio
2015



Vue d'exposition
*Idoles du village
global*

Vue studio
2015



Vue d'exposition
Idoles du village
global

Vue studio
2015



Photograph series

Hier ne meurt jamais

In collaboration with Erwan Fichou

2015

Hier ne meurt jamais [Yesterday never dies] is a series of images created by Théo Mercier in collaboration with Erwan Fichou. Initiated in Rome, this series presents large-format ancient ruins from the Mediterranean basin, on which hang large banners made from tourist hotel sheets, displaying quotations from mainstream, globalized culture. Faced with the silence of these ancient monuments, these banners attempt to establish a moving dialogue between today's collective memory and the memory of the ruins. Oscillating between nostalgia and eradication, this series re-enacts the eternal struggle between the ancient and the modern, revealing the different strata of fantasy that link past, present and future.

Vue d'œuvre
Hier ne meurt jamais

2015



Vue d'œuvre
Hier ne meurt jamais

2015



Vue d'œuvre
Hier ne meurt jamais

2015



Vue d'œuvre
Hier ne meurt jamais

2015



Vue d'œuvre
Hier ne meurt jamais

2015



Vue d'œuvre
Hier ne meurt jamais

2015



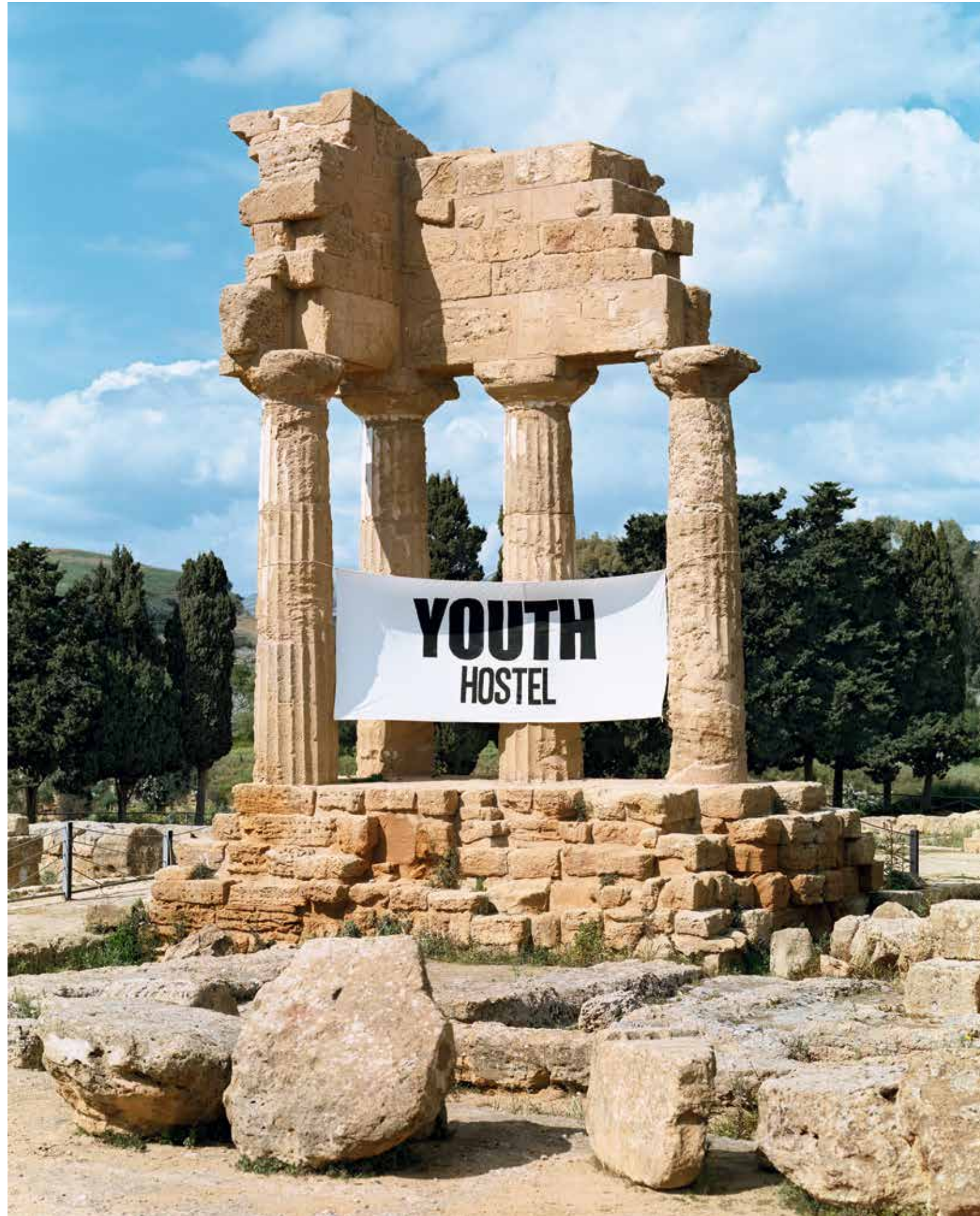
Vue d'œuvre
Hier ne meurt jamais

2015



Vue d'œuvre
Hier ne meurt jamais

2015



Installation

La possession du monde n'est pas ma priorité

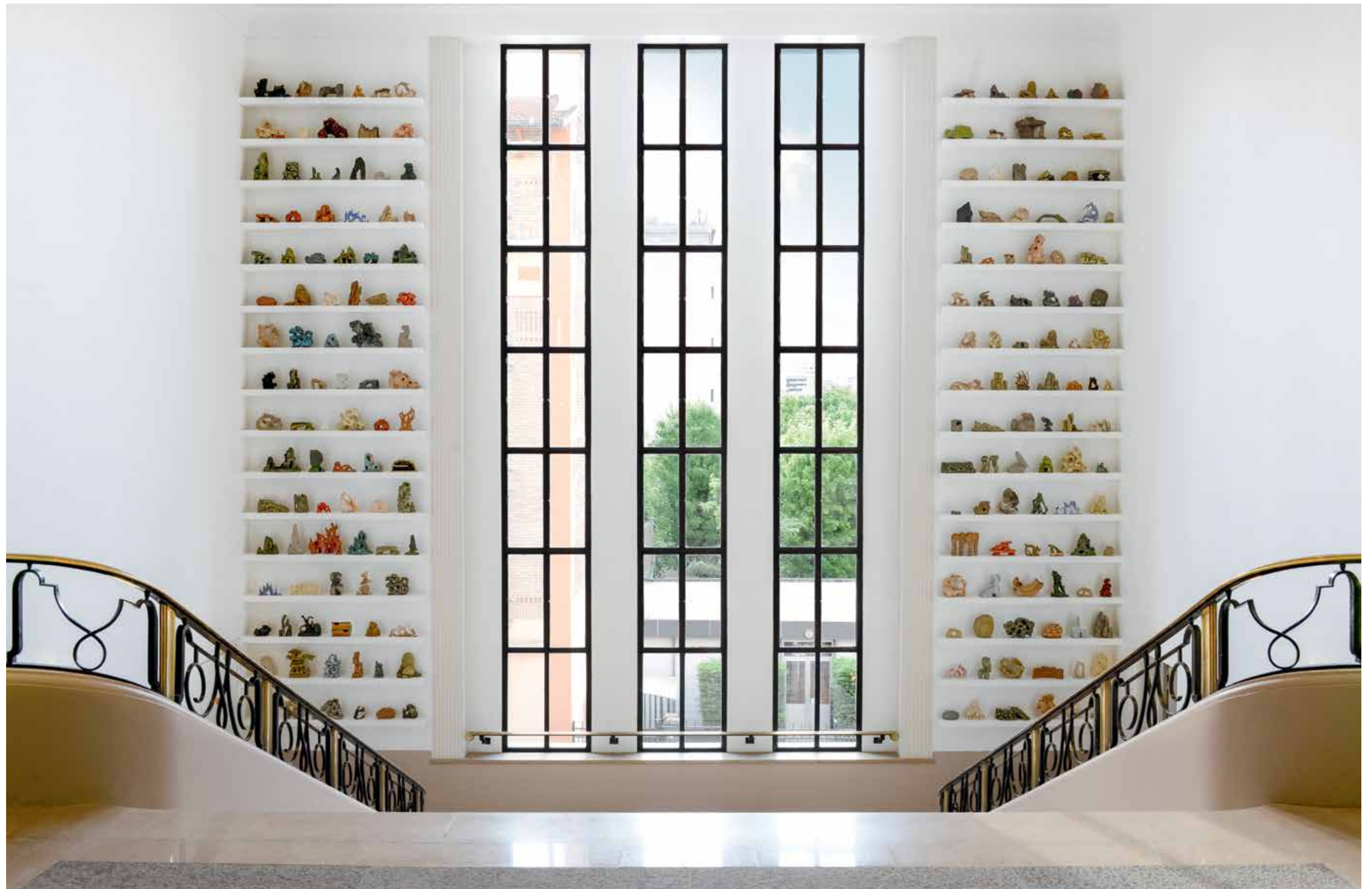
2013 —

«We no longer live in nature, but rather with an idea of nature. So prefaces Théo Mercier's description of his passion for the junk artifacts that populate our marine reconstructions with unparalleled aplomb.

Here, it's the aquarium stones themselves that are mistaken for art, since after all they are the creations of designers who «necessarily put themselves in the place of a fish for the time of a drawing». Of these ready-mades in China, the stones that fascinate the artist and make up this post-industrial geological collection are not those reproduced from what exists - the high-end ones - but those that have been invented from scratch. This is what aquascaping is all about: landscaping an underwater space, giving shape to a fantasy of nature in a box. If Roger Caillois's stones are «older than life and remain after it on cooled planets», Théo Mercier's aquarium stones do not go back to the origins of the world, but rather to the origins of capitalism; hollow copies of nature, they bear witness to an age of emptiness and the appearance of knowledge. These stones, which will never gather moss, have a life of their own: they come as much from animaleries as from restaurant aquariums, where they have rubbed shoulders with fish dedicated to human pleasure. At last, they're on display in the open air, like the three hundred miniature sculptures by anonymous authors that they are.

Vue d'œuvre
*La possession du
monde n'est pas ma
priorité*

Salon de Montrouge
2013



Vue d'œuvre
*La possession du
monde n'est pas ma
priorité*

Bugada & Cargnel, Paris
2017



Vue d'œuvre
*La possession du
monde n'est pas ma
priorité*

Specimen
2020



Vue d'œuvre
*La possession du
monde n'est pas ma
priorité*

Specimen
2020



Vue d'œuvre
*La possession du
monde n'est pas ma
priorité*

Specimen
2020



Solo show

Le grand MESS

Le lieu unique, Nantes

2013

The exhibition Le grand MESS presents a collection of new, humorously-titled fetish pieces, the fruit of city wanderings and compulsive shopping between the BHV, sex shops, farces-et-atrape stores and the Puces. A rearranger of the world rather than a creator ex-nihilo, Théo Mercier confirms the Surrealist definition of «Beauty» as the chance encounter of an erotic mug and a hamburger on a shelf. Faced with the challenge of a retrospective, he avoids the risk of self-museification by opting for a two-sided exhibition, with a «place» borrowing its codes from museum and commercial showcases, and a «reverse» set featuring a messily organized workshop-storage.

Vue d'exposition
Le Grand MESS

Lieu Unique, Nantes, France
2013



Vue d'exposition
Le Grand MESS

Lieu Unique, Nantes, France
2013



Vue d'exposition
Le Grand MESS

Lieu Unique, Nantes, France
2013



Vue d'exposition
Le Grand MESS

Lieu Unique, Nantes, France
2013



Vue d'exposition
Le Grand MESS

Lieu Unique, Nantes, France
2013



Vue d'exposition
Le Grand MESS

Lieu Unique, Nantes, France
2013



Vue d'exposition
Le Grand MESS

Lieu Unique, Nantes, France
2013



Vue d'exposition
Le Grand MESS

Lieu Unique, Nantes, France
2013



Vue d'exposition
Le Grand MESS

Lieu Unique, Nantes, France
2013



Vue d'exposition
Le Grand MESS

Lieu Unique, Nantes, France
2013



Vue d'exposition
Le Grand MESS

Lieu Unique, Nantes, France
2013



Vue d'exposition
Le Grand MESS

Lieu Unique, Nantes, France
2013



Vue d'exposition
Le Grand MESS

Lieu Unique, Nantes, France
2013



Vue d'exposition
Le Grand MESS

Lieu Unique, Nantes, France
2013



Performance

Big Sisters

In collaboration with Steven Michel

2020

Following Affordable Solution for Better Living, Steven Michel and Théo Mercier continue their exploration of biopower with BIG SISTERS, a piece conceived and designed with four dancers aged between 23 and 65: Laura Belgrano, Lili Buvat, Marie de Corte and Mimi Wascher. Imagined as an experimental film freely inspired by *Les Guérillères* by lesbian activist and feminist author Monique Wittig, BIG SISTERS unfolds as a kaleidoscopic fresco on women and their representations, alternating between portraits and self-portraits, historical reconstructions and SF. At once ghosts, spaceships, missiles and planets, the bodies of the four sisters are time capsules, highlighting the choreography of glances and fantasies at play in the staging of female bodies, revealing the body-combat of a thousand-year-old war of liberation.

Performance

Skinless

2024

Au cur d'une arène gigantesque faite de blocs de déchets recyclés et compressés en papier et aluminium, trois personnages masculins tentent de recycler la notion d'amour à partir des ruines du capitalisme. Variation autour de l'érotisme, Skinless est aussi le fruit d'un partenariat en nature avec le géant français du recyclage PAPREC, qui fournit les déchets locaux nécessaires à la constitution de cet éco-système monumental et recyclable à l'infini, en France et en Europe. Fort de ses expérimentations sur le sourcing en circuit-court entamé avec Outremonde, Théo Mercier poursuit ici sa réflexion plastique sur les modes de production éco-responsable.

Skinless



Skinless







Elles parlent ensemble du danger qu'elles ont été pour le pouvoir, elles racontent comment on les a brûlées sur des bûchers pour les empêcher à l'avenir de s'assembler. Elles ont pu commander aux tempêtes, faire sombrer des flottes, défaire des armées. Elles ont été maîtresses des poisons des vents des volontés. Elles ont pu à leur gré exercer leur pouvoir et transférer toutes sortes de personnalités dans de simples animaux, des oies des cochons des oiseaux des tortues.





Big Sisters





Big Sisters



Big Sisters



Big Sisters



Performance

Affordable Solution for Better Living

In collaboration with Steven Michel

2018

In Affordable Solution for Better Living, Théo Mercier and Steven Michel reflect on the question of beauty for all and the ideological object. Furniture associated with the Swedish brand IKEA, but also with a social utopia full of contradiction. On stage, the «alpha male» orchestrates his life in the form of instruction manuals. At once the object of study and the researcher, he is the furniture, the assembler and the user. This centaur, half-man, half-furniture, sinks into an artificial well-being and abandons himself to lines of conduct that make him play all the roles in his life, those imposed by family, society, industry and the economy. Physical performance and domestic drama have never gone so well together.

Silver Lion at the 2019 Venice Biennale of Dance

*Affordable Solution
for Better Living*



*Affordable Solution
for Better Living*



*Affordable Solution
for Better Living*



*Affordable Solution
for Better Living*



*Affordable Solution
for Better Living*



*Affordable Solution
for Better Living*



Performance

La Fille du Collectionneur

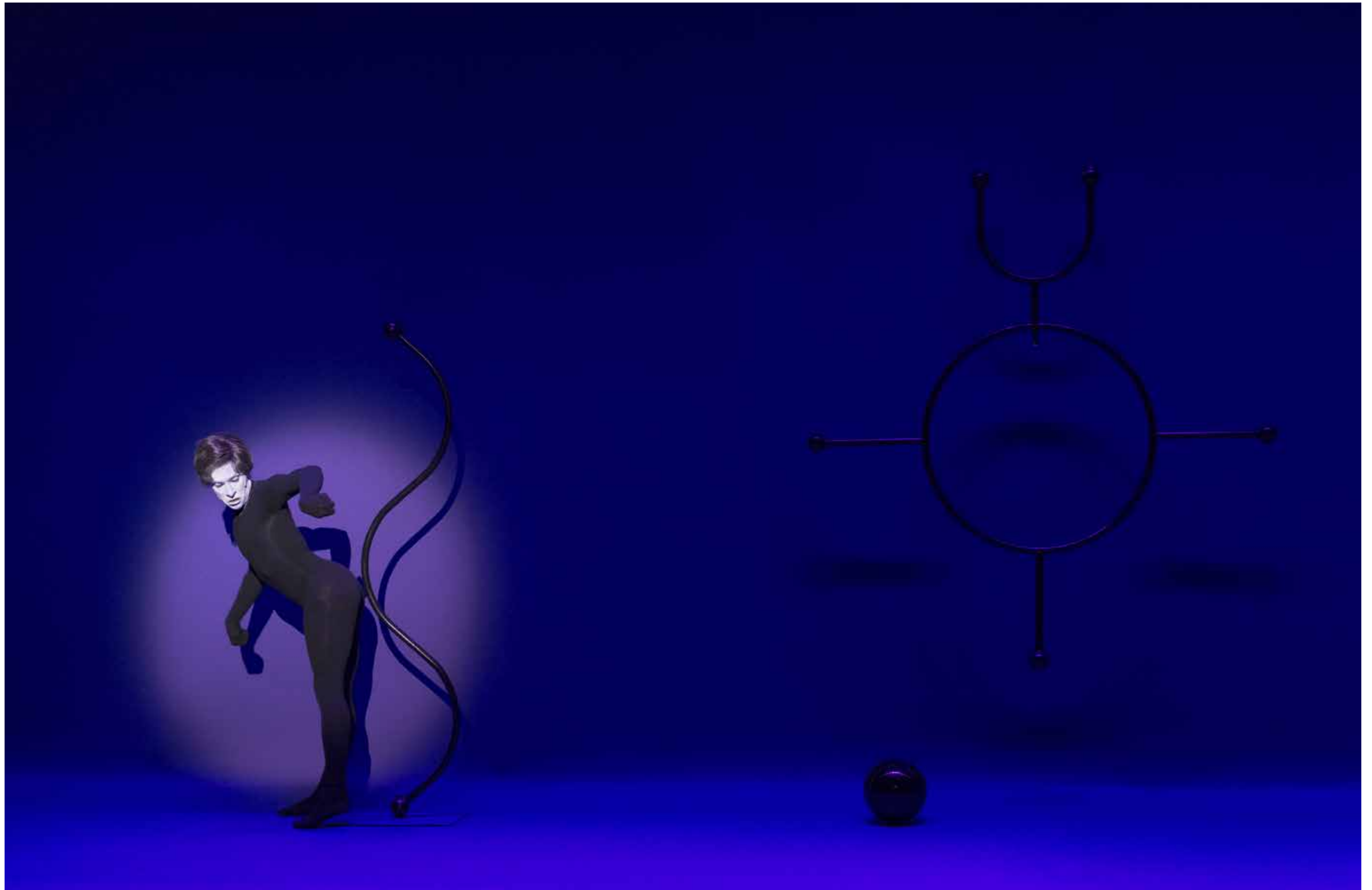
2017

La Fille du collectionneur deals with the phantom collection, giving viewers the opportunity to go on a unique kind of imaginary visit, somewhere between police investigation and esthetic quest, in which habitual ways of seeing are reversed. In the middle of a decor using false perspective, which oscillates between an auction hall, a playing field and instruments of torture, the collector's daughter becomes a pretext for drawing a portrait in absentia of the missing Father figure. Through a fractal development, this initiation journey peppered with enigmas and ordeals, evokes the vulnerability of memory and the emotional relationship that humans have with their histories, in which the legacy of the past and individual destiny inevitably come face-to-face.

*La Fille du
Collectionneur*



*La Fille du
Collectionneur*



*La Fille du
Collectionneur*



*La Fille du
Collectionneur*



*La Fille du
Collectionneur*



*La Fille du
Collectionneur*



From Monteverdi to Brahms, by way of the major classics, Radio Vinci Park revisits the disquieting strangeness of the underground parking lot, the place of all fantasies tied to our contemporary infernos, where a motormachian ritual between the choreographer François Chaignaud, the motorcycle stuntman Cyril Bourny, and the harpsichordist Marie-Pierre Brébant unfolds — three skills involving three different body/machine relationships. Somewhere between taming act, courtship dance, kidnapping, duel and attack...this ritual gradually transforms the parking lot into an arena.









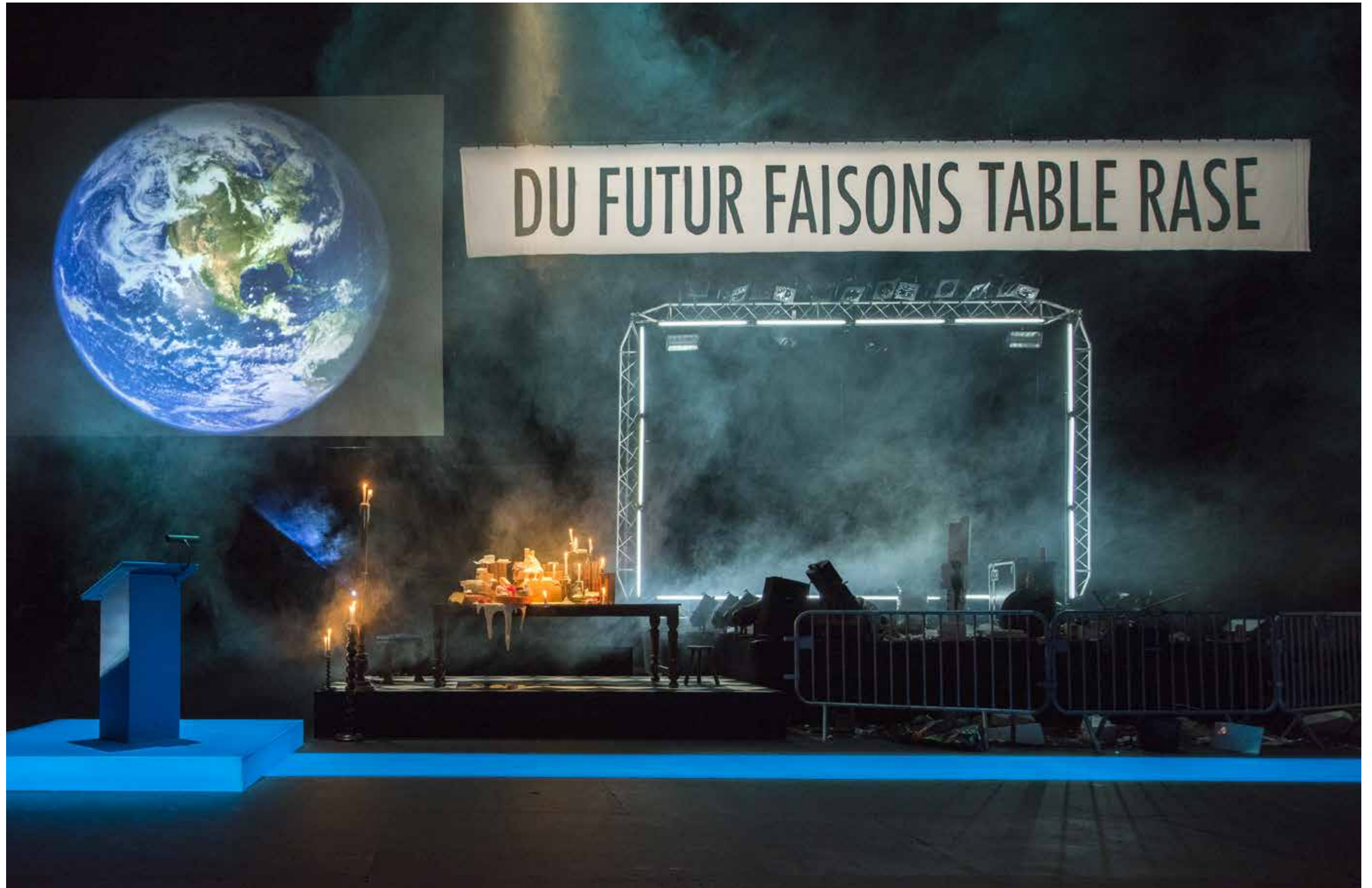
Performance

Du Futur faisons table rase

2014

With *Du futur faisons table rase*, Théo Mercier gives form to a reflection begun during his residency at the Villa Médicis, on the weight of the past and the challenge for artists and individuals to take part in the major axis of Art History. Against a backdrop of ironic slogans and protests, he stages a gang of artists including François Chaignaud, Jonathan Drillet, Pauline Jambet, Philippe Katerine, Marlene Saldana and the group Sexy Sushi. This theatrical, anachronistic and caricatured fresco proposes a broad (mis)appropriation of History, haphazardly borrowing the codes of Burlesque numbers, post-punk imagery, popular culture, science-fiction and the iconography of the greatest masterpieces of neo-classical art.

*Du Futur faisons
table rase*



*Du Futur faisons
table rase*



*Du Futur faisons
table rase*



*Du Futur faisons
table rase*



Du Futur faisons
table rase

